

I was accepted into the diaconate program and began formation classes in January 2002. During the process, I asked the formation department if there was a parish that may need me after I am ordained. I knew that I had to go where I was really needed. The first parish on the list was St. Casimir. My wife Helen and I were searching for an active parish and a Catholic school for our children. On February 29, 2004, I drove my wife Helen and all of our eight children to check-out St. Casimir for the 11:30 mass on the first Sunday of Lent.

We all had a wonderful experience. Everyone was so very welcoming, Kevin and Brigitte chose amazing music, and Fr. Bill's singing was very inspiring. Everything seemed to click. We did not check-out any other parishes on the diocesan list because St. Casimir felt like "home." The next step was to meet with Fr. Bill and ask if St. Casimir would sponsor me as I completed formation to become a deacon.

Fr. Bill enthusiastically welcomed my entire family and it did not take time for us to start becoming involved in the parish life. We started volunteering to help at the Lenten Fish Fry and Corn Roast. I really loved serving and eating the polish sausage. We cooked for the Advent House Meals and helped run Vacation Bible School.

I started the St. Joseph Ministry, a group of parishioners who performed maintenance and repair tasks on the church buildings and property. We designed and made the Stations of the Cross plaques. We gathered on Saturdays to fix or repair whatever was needed. We really enjoyed renovating the church steps. The labor and materials were donated, and it extended the life of the steps at no cost for a few more years.

I was ordained on May 19, 2007. That same day, I was honored to baptize my first grandchild during the Saturday evening mass. After all the weekend masses, the parish hosted amazing ordination receptions. Everyone at St Casimir was very kind to me and my family. We will always hold all the good memories in our hearts and never forget the amazing St. Casimir parish family.

Deacon Al Turkovich